



Biden tells Hill Democrats he won't step aside, says of party drama: 'It's time for it to end'

... whose side Trump and the MAGA Republicans are on. Trump and ...
... another \$5 trillion in tax cuts for rich people so they can cut Social Sec ...
... let that happen. It's trickle-down economics on steroids. We know ...
... the middle out and the bottom up, not the top down. We ...
... erations pay their fair share of taxes in this ...
... the Affordable Care Act, which could ...
... that happen either. Trump got ...
... new housing units ...
... think

JOSEPH R. BIDEN, JR.

July 8, 2024

Fellow Democrats,

Now that you have returned from the July 4th recess, I want you to know that despite all speculation in the press and elsewhere, I am firmly committed to staying in this race, to this race to the end, and to beating Donald Trump.

I have had extensive conversations with the leadership of the party, elected officials, rank and file members, and most importantly, Democratic voters over these past 10 days or so. I have heard the concerns that people have – their good faith fears and worries about what is at stake in this election. I am not blind to them. Believe me, I know better than anyone the responsibility and the burden the nominee of our party carries. I carried it in 2020 when the fate of our country was at stake. I also know these concerns come from a place of real respect for my lifetime of public service and my record as President, and I have been moved by the expressions of support from so many who have known me well and supported me.

A letter that President Joe Biden sent to House Democrats telling them to support him in election, shown Monday, July 8, 2024 in Washington.

Associated Press

By LISA MASCARO, ZEKE MILLER and SEUNG MIN KIM
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden, in an open letter to congressional Democrats, stood firm Monday against calls for him to drop his reelection candidacy

and called for an end to the intraparty drama that has torn apart Democrats since his dismal public debate performance.

Biden's efforts to shore up a deeply anxious Democratic Party came as lawmakers returned to Washington con-

fronting a choice: Work to revive his campaign or try to edge out the party leader, a make-or-break time for his campaign and their own political futures.

Biden wrote in the two-page letter that "the question of how to move forward has

been well-aired for over a week now. And it's time for it to end." He stressed that the party has "one job," which is to defeat presumptive Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump in November.

"We have 42 days to the

Democratic Convention and 119 days to the general election," Biden said in the letter, distributed by his reelection campaign.

Continued on Page 2

TASTE OF ARUBA
Every Wednesday with LOCAL Food and Live show

TGI Fridays The Hot Box Sexy Shrimps Che Bar Drunk's Denial Live on stage

Criollo Shrimp Fried Funchi Shrimp Pastechi Aruba Ariba Cashew Cake Cultural Show at 8pm

Shopping & Entertainment Center Located in Palm Beach, across the Holiday Inn hotel

Biden tells Hill Democrats he won't step aside, says of party drama: 'It's time for it to end'

Continued from Front

"Any weakening of resolve or lack of clarity about the task ahead only helps Trump and hurts us. It's time to come together, move forward as a unified party, and defeat Donald Trump."

Anxiety is running high as top-ranking Democratic lawmakers are joining calls for Biden to step aside despite his defiance. At the same time, some of the president's most staunch supporters are redoubling the fight for Biden's presidency, insisting there's no one better to beat Trump in what many see as among the most important elections of a lifetime.

Biden followed up the letter with a phone interview with MSNBC's "Morning Joe" show, in which he insisted that "average Democrats" want him to stay in the race and said he was frustrated by the calls from party officials for him to step aside.

"They're big names, but I don't care what those big names think," Biden said. He threw the gauntlet at his critics, saying if they're serious they ought to "announce for president, challenge me at the convention" or rally behind him against Trump. Later, Biden joined a call with members of his national finance committee, while first lady Jill Biden campaigned for her husband in a three-state swing focused on en-



President Joe Biden attends a church service at Mt. Airy Church of God in Christ, Sunday, July 7, 2024, in Philadelphia.

gaging veterans and military families.

"For all the talk out there about this race, Joe has made it clear that he's all in," she told a military crowd in Wilmington, North Carolina. "That's the decision that he's made, and just as he has always supported my career, I am all in, too."

Democratic voters are split on whether Biden should remain the Democratic Party's nominee for president, or whether there should be a different Democratic nominee, according to a New York Times/Siena College poll. More voices spoke up Monday, including the chair

of the House's Congressional Progressive Caucus, Rep. Pramila Jayapal, who was not ready to cast aside Biden, saying that the threat of a second Trump presidency remains too high. Yet one of the most endangered Democrats this election cycle, Sen. Jon Tester of Montana, said in a statement, "President Biden has got to prove to the American people—including me—that he's up to the job for another four years." However, Biden's letter left some House Democrats, who want to hear directly from Biden himself, furious, according to one House aide granted anonymity to dis-

cuss the situation. Lawmakers particularly bristled at being cast as out of touch with voters since representatives in particular have been home in their districts listening to voters.

Biden planned to meet virtually Monday with the Congressional Black Caucus — one of his staunchest blocs of supporters in Congress. The White House would not say whether Biden would meet with all Democratic lawmakers in person at the Capitol this week.

Meanwhile, press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said Biden had undergone three neurological exams while in

the White House as part of his annual physical exams — and no more — and said the president has not been diagnosed with or treated for Parkinson's.

It's a tenuous and highly volatile juncture for the president's party. Democrats who have worked alongside Biden for years — if not decades — and cherished his life's work on policy priorities are now entertaining uncomfortable questions about his political future. And it's unfolding as Biden hosts world leaders for the NATO summit this week in Washington.

The drama is playing out with just over a month until the Democratic National Convention and just a week before Republicans gather in Milwaukee to renominate Trump as their presidential pick. Many Democrats are arguing the attention needs to be focused not on Biden but on the former president's felony conviction in the hush money case and pending federal charges in his effort to overturn the 2020 election. In an effort to "get on the same page," House Democratic leader Hakeem Jeffries is convening lawmakers for private meetings before he shows his own preference, according to a person familiar with the situation and granted anonymity to discuss it. He planned to gather on Monday some Democrats whose bids for reelection are most vulnerable. □



A traveler walks through the departure area as airline catering workers who are employed by Gate Gourmet picket with their supporters, calling for a new union contract with raises and affordable health insurance, Wednesday, July 3, 2024, at Miami International Airport in Miami.

Associated Press

By **MATT OTT**
AP Business Writer

More than 3 million people

passed through U.S. airport security on Sunday, the first time that number of passen-

More than 3 million pass through US airport security in a day for the first time as travel surges

gers have been screened in a single day as travel surges, according to the U.S. Transportation Security Administration.

The record, which was widely predicted to happen at some point over the July Four holiday weekend, topped the June 23 mark of more than 2.99 million screened passengers. Eight of the 10 busiest days in TSA's history have come this year as the number of travelers tops pre-pandemic levels.

TSA was created after the terror attacks on Sept. 11,

2001, and replaced a collection of private security companies that were hired by airlines. The agency operates under the Department of Homeland Security, which said that agents on Sunday checked 35 passengers every second.

While Americans continue to grapple with inflation, travel costs including airline tickets and hotel prices have eased significantly from a year ago. Hotel rooms were 1.2% cheaper in May compared with a year ago, according to recent government infla-

tion data. Those costs have been trending lower since the beginning of the year. While most U.S. airlines lost money in the first quarter — traditionally the weakest time of year for travel — they were all expecting a summer of full planes.

This spring, American and Southwest said they expected solid second quarter profits. They joined Delta Air Lines and United Airlines in giving an upbeat outlook for the April-through-June period, which includes the start of peak season for carriers. □

Is college worth it? Poll finds only 36% of Americans have confidence in higher education

By JOCELYN GECKER
Associated Press

Americans are increasingly skeptical about the value and cost of college, with most saying they feel the U.S. higher education system is headed in the "wrong direction," according to a new poll. Overall, only 36% of adults say they have a "great deal" or "quite a lot" of confidence in higher education, according to the report released Monday by Gallup and the Lumina Foundation. That confidence level has declined steadily from 57% in 2015.

Some of the same opinions have been reflected in declining enrollment as colleges contend with the effects of the student debt crisis, concerns about the high cost of tuition and political debates over how they teach about race and other topics.

The dimming view of whether college is worth the time and money cuts across all demographics including gender, age, political affiliation. Among Republicans, the number of respondents with high confidence in higher education has dropped 36 percentage points over the last decade far more than it dropped for Demo-



In this May 13, 2018, file photo, new graduates walk into the High Point Solutions Stadium before the start of the Rutgers University graduation ceremony in Piscataway Township, N.J.

Associated Press

crats or independents. "It's so expensive, and I don't think colleges are teaching people what they need to get a job," says Randy Hill, 59, a registered Republican in Connecticut and a driver for a car service. His nephew plans to do a welding apprenticeship after graduating high school. "You graduate out of college, you're up to eyeballs in debt, you can't get a job, then you can't pay

it off. What's the point?" The June 2024 survey's overall finding that 36% of adults feel strong confidence in higher education is unchanged from the year before. But what concerns researchers is shifting opinion on the bottom end, with fewer Americans saying they have "some" confidence and more reporting "very little" and "none." This year's findings show almost as many

people have little or no confidence, 32%, as those with high confidence. Experts say that fewer college graduates could worsen labor shortages in fields from health care to information technology. For those who forgo college, it often means lower lifetime earnings 75% less compared with those who get bachelor's degrees, according to Georgetown University's Center on Educa-

tion and the Workforce. And during an economic downturn, those without degrees are more likely to lose jobs. "It is sad to see that confidence hasn't grown at all," says Courtney Brown, vice president at Lumina, an education nonprofit focused on increasing the numbers of students who seek education beyond high school. "What's shocking to me is that the people who have low or no confidence is actually increasing." This year's survey added new, detailed questions in an effort to understand why confidence is shrinking. Almost one-third of respondents say college is "too expensive," while 24% feel students are not being properly educated or taught what they need to succeed.

The survey did not specifically touch on the protests this year against the war in Gaza that divided many college campuses, but political views weighed heavily on the findings. Respondents voiced concerns about indoctrination, political bias and that colleges today are too liberal. Among the respondents who lack confidence, 41% cite political agendas as a reason. □

U.S. to expand control of land sales to foreigners near 56 additional military sites

By FATIMA HUSSEIN
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. wants to expand a Treasury committee's jurisdiction to review land sales near U.S. military sites where foreigners are the buyers. New Treasury rulemaking would expand the U.S. Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States' powers to review land sales near 56 additional military sites, bringing the overall number to 227 military sites. A 2018 law granted the committee authority to review real estate transactions near sensitive sites across the U.S. The U.S. Committee on Foreign Investment in the Unit-

ed States is a little-known but powerful government committee also known as CFIUS tasked with investigating corporate deals for national security concerns that holds power to force companies to change ownership structures or divest completely from the U.S. It is made up of members from the State, Justice, Energy and Commerce departments among others. The Monday rulemaking announcement comes after President Joe Biden in May issued a divestment order blocking a Chinese-backed cryptocurrency mining firm from owning land near a Wyoming nuclear missile base, calling

its proximity to the base a "national security risk." Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said in a statement that the Biden administration is "committed to using our strong investment screening tool to defend America's national security, including actions that protect military installations from external threats." In May 2023, rulemaking began to give CFIUS the power to review land sales near military bases after controversy arose over plans by the Fufeng Group to build a \$700 million wet corn milling plant about 12 miles from the Grand Forks Air Force Base, which houses air and space operations. The proposed rule will be

open for public comment for 30 days. The U.S. has already issued major new tariffs on electric

vehicles, semiconductors, solar equipment and medical supplies imported from China. □



Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen testifies during a Senate Appropriations Subcommittee hearing, June 4, 2024, on Capitol Hill in Washington.

Associated Press

New parents in Baltimore could get a \$1,000 'baby bonus' under a proposal to fight child poverty

By LEA SKENE

Associated Press

BALTIMORE (AP) — New parents in Baltimore could receive a \$1,000 "baby bonus" if voters approve a proposal that aims to help reduce childhood poverty from birth with a modest one-time cash payment. A group of Baltimore teachers is behind the effort. Organizers recently secured the necessary 10,000 signatures to bring the question to voters as a ballot initiative in November. Their campaign relied on extensive canvassing efforts and a cute logo: a flying cartoon stork with a bag of money in its beak. The proposal is loosely modeled on a program implemented this year in Flint, Michigan, where women receive \$1,500 during mid-pregnancy and \$500 per month for the first year after giving birth. Officials said the Flint program was the first of its kind in the U.S. Countries in Europe and Asia have experimented with larger cash payments, but those programs are meant to encourage more people to have more kids, not address child poverty. Italy, which has one of the world's lowest birth rates, provides baby bonus checks and other benefits aimed at increasing the population.



Nate Golden, president of the Maryland Child Alliance, poses for a portrait with a petition form for the Baltimore Baby Fund, Wednesday, July 3, 2024, in Baltimore.

Associated Press

Organizers behind the Baltimore campaign say more systemic change is needed on a national level to help lift families out of poverty, but giving new parents a modest financial boost could prove an important first step. "If we're going to spend a limited amount of money, where do you get the most bang for your buck? Research says at birth," said Nate Golden, a high school math teacher who helped found the Maryland Child Alliance, which is pushing

for the ballot initiative. "This could literally have a lifelong impact on a kid." Golden said he also hopes the program will demonstrate to elected leaders in Baltimore and beyond that there's a real appetite among voters for implementing policies that help vulnerable children succeed. The issue is particularly urgent in Baltimore, where an estimated 31% of school-aged children are experiencing poverty, according to census data. Nationally,

childhood poverty fell during the pandemic thanks to federal relief programs, but it has since climbed again to about 12% in 2022. It's incredibly hard for the poor to move up the economic ladder, especially among communities of color. Research shows that most American children born into the lowest income bracket will remain at roughly the same socioeconomic status for the rest of their lives. Golden said he sees similar scenarios playing out in his

classroom every school year with students who are experiencing homelessness, food insecurity, gun violence and countless other challenges. "When you see what they're going through outside school, I'm still going to demand their best in the classroom but it's just not enough," he said. "We have to take care of these underlying needs before we can get kids to focus on learning." If the ballot initiative is approved, all new parents in Baltimore will receive a one-time payment of at least \$1,000. An estimated 7,000 children are born in Baltimore each year, so the program would cost about \$7 million annually, which is roughly 0.16% of the city's annual operating budget, according to supporters. The initiative won't result in higher taxes, but it will be up to Baltimore's City Council to allocate funds if it passes. Advocates say taking a blanket approach to distributing the funds ensures that no one falls through the cracks. It also means some of the money goes to affluent parents who don't need assistance, but Golden said it's worth including them to avoid leaving out the poorest families. □

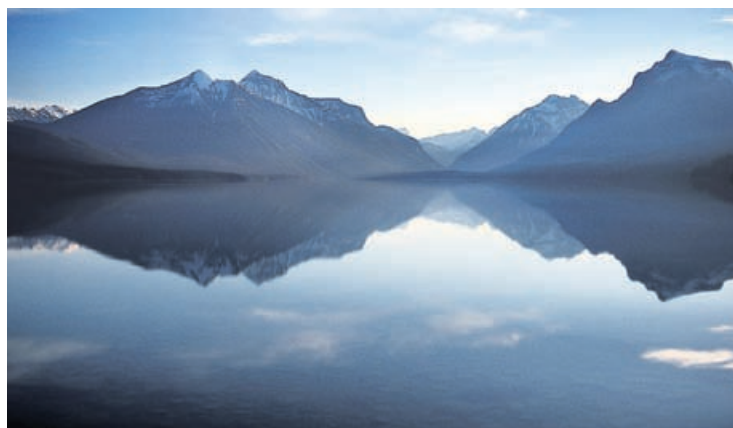
2 men drown in Glacier National Park over the July 4 holiday weekend

WEST GLACIER, Mont. (AP)

— Two men drowned in Glacier National Park over the July 4 holiday weekend, park officials said. A 26-year-old man from India was hiking on Avalanche Lake Trail on Saturday morning when he walked near Avalanche Creek, slipped on rocks and was caught in the cold, fast-moving water. Witnesses saw him go underwater and resurface briefly before being swept through a narrow gorge at about 8:30 a.m. A helicopter crew and park rangers searched for the man, but they believe

his body was caught underwater in the gorge. The creek is running high due

to snowmelt runoff. Due to poor visibility and hazardous conditions, the search



Lake McDonald acts as a near-perfect mirror for the mountains in Glacier National Park, Montana, June 22, 2011. From left are Stanton Mountain, Mount Vaught, McPartland Mountain, Mount Cannon and Mount Brown.

Associated Press

effort has been scaled back and rangers are monitoring the area, park officials said. The man was living and working in California and was in the park on vacation with friends. On Saturday evening, a 28-year-old man from Nepal was swimming with friends in Lake McDonald near Sprague Creek Campground. According to friends, he was an inexperienced swimmer. He was about 30 yards (27 meters) from shore when he started to struggle and went underwater at about 6:25 p.m.

The lake is shallower near the edge, but there is a large drop-off in the area where the man went under, said park spokeswoman Gina Icenoggle. The Flathead County Sheriff's Office dive team recovered his body in 35 to 40 feet (11 to 12 meters) of water at about 8:20 p.m. The man was living and working in Portland, Oregon, and was on vacation with friends. Park officials have contacted the Nepal and India consulates for assistance in contacting the victims' families. Their names have not been released. □

Myanmar's ethnic rebels say they captured an airport in a new setback for the military government

By GRANT PECK
Associated Press

BANGKOK (AP) — One of Myanmar's most powerful ethnic minority groups battling the military government said it captured an airport serving the country's top world-class beach resort, marking the first time resistance forces have seized such a facility.

Residents of the area in the southern part of the western state of Rakhine, along with local media, also reported the seizure of Thandwe Airport, also known as Ma Zin Airport, about 260 kilometers (160 miles) northwest of Yangon, Myanmar's biggest city. It's the latest major setback for the military government that took power in 2021 after ousting the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi. Armed resistance to military rule is taking place in much of the country, led by pro-democracy militants as well as guerrilla groups affiliated with ethnic minorities.

The violence in Myanmar has caused international concern, with its military widely condemned for the disproportionate use of deadly force to try to quash its opponents. Critics of the military have urged the international community to impose ever-stronger sanctions to restrain its use of force.

The Arakan Army said in a statement on the Telegram messaging app on Sunday night that it had recovered the bodies of more than 400 soldiers from the recent



In this handout photo provided by Mandalay People's Defence Force, members of the Ta'ang National Liberation Army, one of the ethnic armed forces in the Brotherhood Alliance, and the Mandalay People's Defence Force pose for a photograph in front of the captured toll-gate in Nawnghkio township in Shan state, Myanmar, June 26, 2024.

Associated Press

fighting in the area, as well as a cache of ammunition. The Associated Press could not independently verify the claims by the group, which in the past have been disputed.

The seizure of the airport, one of six in Rakhine, would appear to open the way for the rebels to seize Rakhine's coastal region, even as they consolidates control over much of the northern part of the state.

The Arakan Army is the military wing of the Buddhist Rakhine ethnic group in

Rakhine state, where they are the majority and seek autonomy from Myanmar's central government. It has recently also called itself the Arakha Army.

Since November last year, the group has been on the offensive and has gained control of nine of 17 townships, along with one in neighboring Chin state. It is also part of an armed ethnic alliance that launched an offensive last October and gained strategic territory in the country's northeast on the border with China.

Ngapali, a 7-kilometer (4-mile) long beach on the Bay of Bengal, had been getting attention from international tourism but development stalled due to COVID-19 pandemic and the conflict that followed the army takeover. Since April, sporadic fighting in nearby villages halted flights to the airport, which serves the beach resort, and most of the 46 hotels and guest houses were shut down.

A Ngapali hotel executive who had recently escaped the area told The Associated

Press on Monday his staff had fled the property.

A travel agent in Thandwe, about 5 kilometers (3 miles) east of Ngapali, told the AP that she had heard the sound of the fighting coming from outside of the town, but the situation inside was quiet with no guerrillas in the immediate vicinity.

Both spoke on condition of anonymity because of fear for their safety.

Western nations including the United States have imposed economic and diplomatic sanctions on Myanmar's military leaders and businesses and their cronies in response to what they see as serious human rights violations including usurping democracy.

The military's critics urge stronger measures, especially blocking the supply of jet fuel to Myanmar, to try to limit its use of air power, which has been frequently employed and often causes civilian casualties. Many countries honor such an embargo, but there are no measures to force others to do so.

The human rights group Amnesty International on Monday issued a report documenting "new shipments of aviation fuel to Myanmar despite global calls to deprive the country's military of the resources it needs to carry out unlawful air strikes."

It said the evasive means by which Myanmar obtains the fuel involve convoluted supply chains to make it hard to trace. □

Rwanda says it is aware of the UK's intention to terminate contentious deportation scheme

By IGNATIUS SSUUNA
Associated Press

KIGALI, Rwanda (AP) — Rwanda's government says it is aware of the United Kingdom's intention to terminate its plan to deport asylum-seekers to the East African country. In a statement late Monday, the office of the Rwandan government spokesman said the deal had been initiated by the UK "to address the crisis of irregular migration affecting the UK — a problem of the

UK, not Rwanda." This is the first time Rwandan authorities are officially commenting on plans by the UK's new Labour Party government to cancel the scheme, which drew criticism from human rights watchdogs and others as cruel and inhumane. It was not clear if Rwandan authorities were reacting to press reports or had been given official notification of plans to terminate the agreement. British Prime

Minister Keir Starmer said in his first news conference Saturday that the Rwanda deportation plan "was dead and buried before it started." Starmer denounced it as a "gimmick," though it's unclear what he will do differently as a record number of people have come ashore in the first six months of the year.

The Rwanda deportation plan once was billed as a solution that would deter migrants from risking their



British Prime Minister Keir Starmer delivers a speech, following his first cabinet meeting as Prime Minister, in London, Saturday, July 6, 2024.

Associated Press

lives on a journey that could end with their deportation to East Africa. So far, it has cost

the UK government hundreds of millions of dollars without taking flight. □

French court rules American man detained after ‘So I raped you’ Facebook message can be extradited

By **NICOLAS VAUX-MONTAGNY** and **MARYCLAIRE DALE**

Associated Press
LYON, France (AP) — A French court ruled on Monday that the American man accused of sexually assaulting a Pennsylvania college student in 2013 and later sending her a Facebook message that said, “So I raped you,” can be extradited to the United States. Ian Cleary, 31, of Saratoga, California, was detained in April in the city of Metz in northeastern France after a three-year search. He has been held in custody pending extradition proceedings since his arrest.

The Court of Appeal in Metz said that Cleary can be extradited. When asked if he wished to be extradited or not, in line with French law, Cleary refused, prosecutors said in a statement Monday. His refusal may delay the extradition process, but it won’t stop it. The ruling is final. Cleary’s case is now the responsibility of the French Justice Ministry, which must prepare and submit the extradition order for the French prime minister. While he awaits the prime minister’s signature, Cleary remains

U.S. Department of Justice
United States Marshals Service



This wanted poster provided by the U.S. Marshals shows Ian Cleary, of Saratoga, Calif.
Associated Press

detained in France. Justice Ministry officials didn’t immediately respond to a request for comment. Cleary had been the subject of an international search since authorities in Pennsylvania issued a 2021 felony warrant in the case weeks after an Associated Press story detailed the reluctance of local prosecutors to pursue campus sex

crimes. The arrest warrant accuses Cleary of stalking an 18-year-old Gettysburg College student at a party, sneaking into her dorm and sexually assaulting her while she texted friends for help. He was a 20-year-old Gettysburg student at the time, but didn’t return to campus. The Gettysburg accuser,

Shannon Keeler, had a rape exam done the same day she was assaulted in 2013. She gathered witnesses and evidence and spent years urging officials to file charges. She went to authorities again in 2021 after discovering the Facebook messages that seemed to come from Cleary’s account. “So I raped you,” the send-

er had written in a string of messages. “I’ll never do it to anyone ever again.” “I need to hear your voice.” “I’ll pray for you.” The AP doesn’t typically identify sexual assault victims without their permission, which Keeler has granted. The accuser’s lawyer in Pennsylvania, reached on Monday, declined to comment on the development. According to the June 2021 warrant, police verified that the Facebook account used to send the messages belonged to Ian Cleary. Adams County District Attorney Brian Sinnett, who filed it, declined to comment on developments when reached Monday. After leaving Gettysburg, Cleary earned undergraduate and graduate degrees from Santa Clara University, near his family home in California, worked for Tesla, and then moved to France for several years, according to his website, which describes his self-published medieval fiction. Keeler, originally from Moorestown, New Jersey, stayed on to graduate from Gettysburg and help lead the women’s lacrosse team to a national title. □

Deforestation in Colombia fell to historic lows in 2023, environment minister says

By **STEVEN GRATAN**
Associated Press
BOGOTA, Colombia (AP) — Deforestation in Colombia fell 36% in 2023 versus the previous year, the govern-

ment said Monday, marking the lowest level since records began. The decline was driven by a drop in environmental destruction in the Amazon, the world’s largest



An illegal gold mining operation that contributed to deforestation is visible in Magui Payan, Colombia, April 20, 2021.
Associated Press

rainforest, including about one-third of it in Colombia, the government of leftist President Gustavo Petro said. Deforestation fell nationwide to about 792 square kilometers (about 305 square miles) in 2023, down from about 1,235 square kilometers (about 477 square miles) a year earlier. A little over half of the deforestation came in the Amazon. The decrease “means that 44,262 hectares of forest stopped being cut down,” Environment Minister Susana Muhamad told journalists. “It is very good news, but we definitely cannot say that the battle is won. We continue to confront illicit economies.” When elected in 2022, Petro

vowed to halt record-high rates of deforestation in the Amazon by limiting agribusiness expansion into the forest and by creating reserves where Indigenous communities and others are allowed to harvest rubber, acai and other non-timber forest products. Advancing peace talks between the government and guerrilla groups in the area, along with financial incentives for farmers in the Amazon to help with conservation, drove the drop. It came after deforestation had fallen about 29% in 2022. Environmental experts over past years have said the decrease in deforestation was also likely tied to orders from

dissident groups of FARC guerrillas forbidding deforestation. Muhamad said Monday the strong presence of government armed forces in these areas as well as progress made with peace talks will be key to maintaining a downward trend. But next year’s figures don’t look as promising. A significant rise in deforestation has already been recorded due to the effects of dry weather caused by El Nino, Muhamad said, which is a weather phenomenon that warms the central Pacific. Mass cattle ranching, drug crops and illegal mining and logging continue to drive deforestation in the Andean nation, Muhamad said. □

Aruba Conservation Foundation employees enhance their knowledge in safety



Recently, the entire team of the Aruba Conservation Foundation (ACF), an independent nature conservation organization consisting of 49 dedicated and passionate employees, participated in various courses to enhance their knowledge and skills in first aid and safety.

The safety of ACF employees and visitors to natural areas is crucial for ACF to ensure a safe working environment and a team equipped to provide first aid. For this reason, ACF continues to invest not only in various safety materials but also in offering courses to train the team to assist in emergencies.

Through a series of different courses and workshops held in June and July 2024,



ACF employees increased their knowledge on important topics such as Fire Extinguisher Safety and recertification in Heartsaver First Aid CPR AED, as part of ACF's ongoing commitment to the safety of its employees and visitors.

In collaboration with Be-

Safe4Life Consultancy and ImSan Aruba, ACF organized mandatory sessions for employees to equip themselves with the latest knowledge to effectively respond to various emergencies. These sessions ranged from dealing with different types of fires and how to use a fire ex-

tinguisher, to enhancing their skills in providing first aid in the field while waiting for professional medical help. By prioritizing safety, the employees improved their ability to assist visitors in emergencies and protect nature, thus fostering a safer and more resilient working environment. Ultimately, the commitment to safety remains a priority to make protected natural areas accessible and safe.

In addition to the various safety-focused courses and workshops, ACF, with financial support from the Aruba Tourism Authority, is also in the process of installing new rules and regulations signs in the protected natural areas. This is to communicate the desired behavior to visitors when visiting these protected areas, ensuring both visitor safety and nature conservation. They are also in the final stages of starting the restoration of various trails located in Arikok National Park, which will further enhance the safety and experience of visitors.

"Investing in our employees' knowledge, skills, along with the necessary materials, especially in the area of safety, is crucial for



our organization. I am very proud of the team for their dedication and the thorough attention given in these courses, in both the theoretical and practical parts. I am confident that these courses will allow our employees to perform their jobs in the best possible way, ensuring the safety of our employees, visitors, and our nature," commented Tyson Lopez, General Director of ACF.

To learn more about the Aruba Conservation Foundation, please visit www.acf.aw or visit Facebook, Instagram, or LinkedIn. To connect with the team, email info@acf.aw. □

A guide for the perfect picture

Where to find the most Instagrammable places in Oranjestad



(Oranjestad)—Imagine, you're taking a stroll in the city center, and you want to take the most picture-perfect photo to show your friends and family back home and online. It seems like the perfect spot can be hard to find, but Oranjestad is full of great spots for a quick snapshot! Here are the most Instagrammable places in Oranjestad.

"I LOVE ARUBA"

Right on Paardenbaai Plaza, near the harbor entrance, you will spot a giant sign that reads "I LOVE ARUBA". A great first stop for a quick shot with the family, this spot is among the few that has become a favorite among tourists, es-

pecially those that are visiting Aruba through a cruise vacation.

Speaking of giant signs that read "Aruba" (because there can never be too many), there is another sign you can find along the Linear Park, in front of Talk of the Town Hotel. It may be a long walk from the harbor to get there, but while you're at it, check out these other spots along the way!

The sitting bull

Yes, you read that right; right in the heart of the city center, in front of the Crystal Casino in the Renaissance Mall, there is a black bull sitting on a bench, waiting for you to take a picture with it. Ok, so it's not a real bull, but "I took a picture with a sitting bull" sounds like a great conversation opener.

See if you can also spot the cow on the roof!

Wooden Swing on Plaza Daniel Leo

While you're in front of the Renaissance Mall, check out the wooden swing on the other side of the mall on Plaza Daniel Leo. Another favorite among visitors wanting a cute snapshot for Instagram. Just pass through the Renaissance Mall and find this gem in front of the back entrance!

Since you've made it this far, one question: How many blue horses have you spotted already?

Renaissance Dock

Last but certainly not least, the Renaissance Dock is the perfect spot to take a beautiful picture, especially at sunset. The dock is located behind the Renaissance Market Place, and runs from the Renaissance Marina up to Renaissance Beach and Wilhelmina Park. This spot offers a gorgeous view of the ocean and sunset, accompanied by the soft waves crashing on the shoreline. You may even spot some iguanas! □

Watch out for Blue Crab Migration near Savaneta

(Oranjestad)—The department of nature & environment in Aruba are urging motorists to watch out for blue crabs crossing the road in Pos Chiquito to make their way to the ocean.

They added a new bright yellow road sign with "Land Crab Crossing" to remind people to be cautious while driving on the highway on Pos Chiquito with blue crabs.

Blue crabs in Aruba are found plenty near the beach areas, especially in Pos Chiquito, because of the amount of mangroves.

They are known to dig holes deep in the beach sand in seek of humidity.

The diet of blue crabs consists of decomposed trees, insects, scorpions and rest of dead animals.

Nesting season for blue crabs is between June & July.

Why protect blue crabs? Because they are of high value for the ecology of the mangroves. Conserving the blue crabs is crucial for the preservation of mangroves. Watch out for crossing blue crabs on the highway near Pos Chiquito & Santo Largo. □



Create museum memories

ORANJESTAD — Museums are an integral part of conserving and honoring cultures, and Aruba is no exception. Our Island has a wide selection of various museums for our locals and visitors to see. Take this opportunity to learn about our island and experience a different day beyond the beach. Let us introduce to you these museums.

Museum of Industry Aruba

The Museum of Industry is located in San Nicolas—better known as the art capital of Aruba. This museum exhibits the industrial history of gold, aloe, phosphate, oil and tourism through elaborated displays and multimedia installations.

The Museum of Industry is situated in the Water Tower in San Nicolas and narrates Aruba's industrial history, which began in the 19th century. The Water Tower was built in 1939 and consists of three sections: the substructure, the high-rising

vertical shaft, and the tank at the top. The Water Tower was purchased by the Monuments Fund in 2003 so it can be restored and preserved as one of Aruba's monuments. The Museum of Industry is part of Aruba Museum Foundation (Fundacion Museo Aruban), which is a foundation set to maintain, preserve, and protect the Aruban cultural sector, history, and nature. The museum of Industry is open daily from 9 am till 6 pm.

For more information, check out their Facebook page Museum of Industry Aruba.

Archaeological Museum of Aruba

The Archaeological Museum of Aruba is located at Schelpstraat 42 in downtown Oranjestad. The renovated historic Ecury complex in the area has been transformed from a family home to a modern museum that preserves Aruba's Am-



erindian cultural heritage. This 21st century museum is especially designed to preserve valuable artifacts dating back to the Pre-Ceramic period of 2500 BC.

In the late 1980's, AMA identified its need for an adequate housing for its collection and activities. After studying various options, a project proposal was drawn up, including the acquisition and restoration of historical buildings in downtown Oranjestad.

These historical buildings were formerly the property of the Ecury family. The "Ecury Complex", is a cluster of single and two-story historic buildings, mainly Dutch colonial architecture from the late 19th and 20th century on a plot of approximately 1.700 m2.

In 1997, the Aruban Government bought the complex for the National Archaeological Museum project. In 2004, a financial agreement was signed with the European Development Fund and in 2006, restoration and construction work began on the monumental buildings and the soon-to-be exhibition space. In December 2007, the key to the complex was delivered and the museum's employees moved to the new location. The final design for the exhibit was completed in November 2007 and the permanent exhibit, financed by the Aruban Government and the Union of Cultural Organizations (UNOCA), opened in July 2009.

At the new location, the

National Archaeological Museum Aruba disposes of approximately 500 m2 for its permanent exhibit. This exhibit conveys information on the origin and culture of the first inhabitants of the island through archaeological objects and modern exhibition techniques. The new permanent exhibit gives the visitor an insight into the cultures that inhabited the island in Pre-Historical and Early Historical times. The museum also hosts attractive public programs, including lectures, educational projects, temporary exhibits and workshops.

The museum is open daily from 9:30 am till 4:30 pm. For more information check out the Facebook page Museo Arqueologico Nacional Aruba. □



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Feeling parched? Grab refreshment by the side of the road!

(Oranjestad)—Touring the island in the blistering heat can leave one feeling rather thirsty and looking to cool off. Luckily there are a few stands along the roads of Aruba that can offer you just what you need: a nice, refreshing beverage!

These “coconut stands” can be found at several locations on the island, where you can cool off with delicious smoothies, drinks, snacks, and of course, fresh coconuts! Perfect during family outings around the island, these stands can be found in the following locations:

- Near the red Anchor in San Nicolas
- On the Linear Park in Oranjestad (in front of airport runway)
- At the California Light House hill
- Bushiribana Gold Mill Ruin
- Bushiribana Beach (Near the Ling & Song Supermarket) □



Dining in? Try making a local favorite How to make “funchi hasa”

(Oranjestad)—A night in can be just as fun as a night out on the town, especially if you got the right snacks to munch on. One of the most famous Aruban snacks or appetizers is “funchi hasa” (fried polenta sticks). A super easy meal that adults and children will both enjoy. Here's how to make it!

Before we start, get to know the basics

So what is funchi hasa? Funchi, or Aruban polenta, is a popular side dish for local dishes, like soups, stews and fried fish. Made from a corn flour, water and butter mixture, this appetizer is traditionally



eaten alongside a warm meal. However, locals also like to fry sticks of funchi for a quick and filling snack.

Ingredients (measured by heart)

1. Polenta flour*
2. Water
3. Butter
4. Salt to taste

Directions

Bring water to a boil in a medium-sized sauce pan. Add in some salt and butter to taste in the boiling water and let this dissolve and melt. Then, gradually add the flour while stirring with a wooden spoon. The mixture will start to begin to harden pretty fast, so be careful not to add too much. At this phase of cooking, you want a goopy thick mixture, but thin enough so you can continue to stir to get all the lumps out.

After reaching a semi-firm, yet flexible texture, grab a baking pan or

any large, deep plate, and pour the mixture in. Be sure that this plate is wet or greased so that the mixture does not stick to the bottom. Let this cool completely while it firms up for the last time. Once it's cooled you can enjoy it as is, topped with some butter or shredded cheese. Or, you can take it to another level of deliciousness.

When your funchi is firm enough, cut it into strips (size is up to you). Heat up some oil in a pan and fry those babies up! After frying, you can top it with some cheese or enjoy it with your favorite dipping sauce.

Note: We recommend the FUNCHI FRESKU polenta flour brand that is sold in all supermarkets on the island. You can also use yellow corn flour from the brand PAN. □

Photo credit of fried funchi sticks: Jacqueline Felida on Pinterest.



Visit the island's popular cave sites!



(Oranjestad)—Among the endless sea of dark brown sand and cacti, there are two caves hidden in the outskirts of San Nicolas, in the north-eastern area of the island. These caves, The Quadirikiri cave and The Fontein Cave are open to visitors of the Arikok National Park, so if you ever decide to take an “off-road” tour in the park, be sure to visit these prehistoric caves...and be sure to bring a flashlight!

Quadirikiri Cave

Known for its two chambers accompanied by a skylight, the Quadirikiri Cave is the most popular cave among locals and tourists, as it is easy to walk through and provides great lighting for pictures.

As with all prehistoric or ancient sites, there is always a folk legend that adds to the lore and mystery of the site. The Quadirikiri cave is no different. The most well-known legend behind the cave could be considered as Aruba's first love story, as it tells the tale of the undying love between the chief's daughter and her beloved. As legend would have it, the chief disapproved of his daughter's choice of lover, as he thought him unworthy. Stubborn and filled with anger, the daughter refused to turn away her beloved.

So, the chief decided to lock her up in the Quadirikiri

Cave, in hopes that she would soon calm down and turn away her lover. Her beloved, in turn, was locked away in the Tunnel of Love (Now known as the Huliba Cave).

Through the pathways underneath the Tunnel of Love running up to the Quadirikiri cave, the two love birds found each other, and refused to let each other go. Because of their stubbornness, they both died in the Quadirikiri Cave, their ascending spirits burning two holes in the ceiling of the cave. This is why the cave has two holes through which sunlight passes through to illuminate the chamber.

Though there have been discoveries of Amerindian drawing on the wall, these have mostly been ruined by vandalism. However, the Fontein Cave further up north, provides a better glimpse in prehistoric Amerindian paintings.

Fontein Cave

Longer than the Quadirikiri Cave, the Fontein Cave contains pathways that stretch to the limestone walls further down. Here is also where prehistoric drawings can be seen. Though this cave does not have its own legend, this was speculated to have been occupied—or at least used by prehistoric Arawak settlers on the island for rituals and other spiritual

ceremonies.

The Huliba Cave/ Tunnel of Love

The Huliba Cave, formerly known as the Tunnel of Love, was once open to the public, and was the biggest and most accessible of all three caves. This cave had five chambers, including one that is heart-shaped. This cave had narrow stairs that led to long pathways deep into the cave, with a staircase leading to the exit on the other side. In one of the chambers, there used to be the carving of the Virgin Mary, put there for the protection of the cave.

However, the Huliba Cave has been permanently closed for a few years now, as a way to preserve the bat population that lives in the cave. These Long Tongue Fruit Bats and Insect Eater Bats are very important to the ecosystem of the island. Though this cave is no longer accessible to the public, it surely is interesting to learn more about the history of these caves and the Awarak tribes that resided or utilized them.

Do note that these caves are very dark, humid, hot, and are inhabited by bats. Do wear comfortable clothing and shoes, as the pathways in these caves may be rough and bumpy, and don't forget to bring a flashlight!☐

Note to visitors:

Due to heavy rainfall in the past few days, Arikok National Park has informed that they have closed the Quadirikiri Cave until further notice for the safety of visitors.

Fontein remains open from 9am to 4pm.



Aruba's cultural and literary development: Then and now

(Oranjestad)—The Aruban culture has seen many substantial developments over the course of a century. With the introduction of the Lago Refinery at the turn of the 20th century, followed by the breakout of the Second World War and the general incentive for political independence during the mid-century, a cultural identity on the island began to take form and have since developed through international and local influences.

In the pre-industrial era of the 19th century, much could not be said about a cultural identity on the island. Still being a part of a Dutch colonial territory at the time, as well as not having political or economic autonomy (Curacao was the center of commerce, cultural life, and political management of the Netherland Antilles at the time), the small population of Aruba consisted mostly of farmers and fishermen, tending to their crops and their cattle, or going out to fish to provide for their family. As Quito Nicolaas states in his article *Historia di Literatura Arubiano: E Bida Cultural* (Literary History of Aruba: Cultural Life), "during the pre-industrial period, there were no significant economic activity that could have created a cultural ambience, with



only one way to generate profit at the time for the subsistence of Aruban families."

It wasn't until the introduction of the Lago Refinery in San Nicolas in 1928, that the island saw a small boom in cultural manifestations and entertainment, as farmers left the 'cunucu' (country) life to work in the refinery, which resulted in Aruba acquiring a different economic pillar. Before this, entertainment and cultural manifestations were mostly experienced by local parishes and the island's elite, who often partook in cultural and entertaining activities around the island, like going to the movie theater or coming together to share poetry on Sundays after church.

Literary life

Throughout the 19th century and up until the 1940s, there were also not much

trace of a cultural climate for the cultural-literary sector on the island. Primary education was introduced on the island in the mid-19th century, followed by secondary and higher education around the late 30's and 40's. It wasn't until the 1950s, with the introduction of the E.R.N.A agreement in 1951 and the signing of the Statute in 1954, which allowed more space for and control over the economic and cultural development of Aruba, that the literary life on the island began to grow substantially compared to decades before. This was in response to local institutions established in the 1940s for cultural and literary growth on the island, but that did not yet capture the attention of the general public. The 1950 brought with it a boom of literary production on the island, like those of V.S. Piterrella, as well as migrant authors José

Ramón Vicioso y Rings William Rufus, who have also contributed to the literary development on the island. The literary movement was further promoted by local broadcasters Voz di Aruba and Radio Kelkboom, with their regular broadcast of literary works.

The 50s and 60s also saw the influence of international cultures, especially that of the United States. During this time, because of international influences as well as the continued prosperity of the oil refinery, cultural traditions in Aruba began to really take form and become widespread, as different worldly and local concepts were introduced in the Aruban society. With the establishment of local television broadcast station Tele-Aruba in 1963, and with time and possibilities, local programs such as "Nos Tera" ("Our Land") started to pay more attention to the Aruban culture and worked to form a cultural consciousness within the community. The 1960s also saw the rise of local authors and artists, who were more comfortable in producing works in our native tongue, Papiamentu,

but who also produced works in Spanish, English and Dutch. This new phenomenon was in response to the interaction between economic growth, individual prosperity, cultural life and literary expression.

The 21st century

Nowadays, international influence on our culture is still prevalent, especially those from Latin America, the United States and The Netherlands. Nevertheless, there also exists a strong cultural identity and traditions that are exclusive to the Aruban culture, often manifesting during traditional celebrations, like Dia di San Juan/ Dera Gai (St. John's Day), Dia di Himno y Bandera (National Hymn and Flag Day), Camping during Easter and much more. With the surge of social media in the last decade, artistic voices, especially those of the younger generation, has become even more prevalent and easily accessible to the community of Aruba through online platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and TikTok. □

Source: *Historia di Literatura Arubiano: E Bida Cultural* by J.R. "Quito" Nicolaas



CROSSWORD

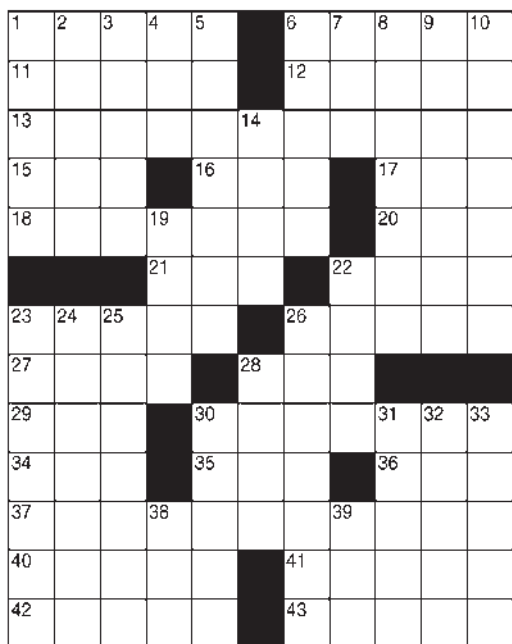
By THOMAS JOSEPH

- ACROSS**
- 1 Rodeo rope
 - 6 — Rica
 - 11 Pianist Schnabel
 - 12 Cars
 - 13 Retailers' astounding sale items
 - 15 Angry rock
 - 16 Follower's suffix
 - 17 Verb for you
 - 18 Greets the general
 - 20 Chess pieces
 - 21 Neon or helium
 - 22 Transmitted
 - 23 Boring tool
 - 26 Pub game
 - 27 "Ratatouille" rat
 - 28 Sty resident
 - 29 Shade tree
 - 30 Sailing event
 - 34 Game cube
 - 35 Mine matter
 - 36 Workout unit
 - 37 Strikingly successful



Yesterday's answer

- DOWN**
- 1 Stows cargo
 - 2 Scent
 - 3 Bar perch
 - 4 Califor- nia's Big —
 - 5 Like planetary paths
 - 6 Play groups
 - 7 Ump's call
 - 8 Clambake clam
 - 9 Downpour
 - 10 Gives approval
 - 14 Purposes
 - 19 Like an eyesore
 - 22 Lengthy story
 - 23 Searches the river
 - 24 De- pendent
 - 25 Enormous
 - 26 Rumi- nates over
 - 28 Andean nation
 - 30 Spa
 - 31 Pay for everyone
 - 32 Pithy
 - 33 Church areas
 - 38 Tooth sur- rounder
 - 39 Assam export



4-16

AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

4-16

CRYPTOQUOTE

X Q S D P C Z M A A D N J X M U

K X Y U Z N P M , Q X I N A W P I M

K X Y U Z N P M . — Z . T . E .

Z W L P K Y Z K Z G

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: APRIL, THE ANGEL OF THE MONTHS, THE YOUNG LOVE OF THE YEAR. — VITA SACKVILLE-WEST

Cruise ship Schedule: July 01 - July 30 2024

			ARR	DEPT	BERTH	
THU	04	CELEBRITY BEYOND	08.00	21.00	C	1
TUE	09	ADVENTURE OF THE SEAS	08.00	20.00	B	1
		CARNIVAL HORIZON	09.00	22.00	C	1
WED	10	RHAPSODY OF THE SEAS	09.00	21.00	C	1
TUE	16	CARNIVAL CELEBRATION	08.00	22.00	C	1
		CARNIVAL VISTA	13.00	23.00	I	1
WED	17	CELEBRITY BEYOND	08.00	21.00	C	1
TUE	23	CARNIVAL HORIZON	09.00	22.00	C	1
TUE	30	CELEBRITY BEYOND	08.00	21.00	C	1

Helpful tips for your stay on Aruba

(Oranjestad)—When traveling to another country, especially for the first time, it is always better to be over-prepared than under-prepared. That is why we have a list of basic but important information that we think may come in handy to Aruba's visitors.

lets used on the island: type A with two flat prongs; type B with two flat and one grounding prong, and on occasion, type F with two round prong and two earth clips on the side. However, Type A is most commonly found in homes and establishments.

Electrical power



Aruba generally operates on 110V to 127V supply voltage and 60Hz. There are also three types of out-

Drinking water



The water that flows through the sinks of every house, hotels and other establishments is distilled and perfectly safe to drink. Aruba's drinking water exceeds WHO's international standards for water quality, so there is no need to buy bottled water from the store.

Supermarket hours



Supermarket hours may vary depending on where you are staying on the island. Generally though, most supermarkets are open from 8am to 9 or 10pm, Monday through Saturday. On Sundays, supermarkets generally close earlier; mostly around 2pm.

Safety



Since February 2024, Aruba has been categorized as the safest country in the Caribbean by The Telegraph, and many tourist that visit have often told us how they feel safe to explore the island or walk around at night. However, rare incidents do occur, so keep yourself and your belongings safe.

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24/7



Commuters walk on railway tracks after trains were disrupted due to heavy rainfall in Mumbai, India, Monday, July 8, 2024.
Associated Press

CLIMATE GLIMPSE: Heat and a hurricane descend on the U.S., other wild weather around the world

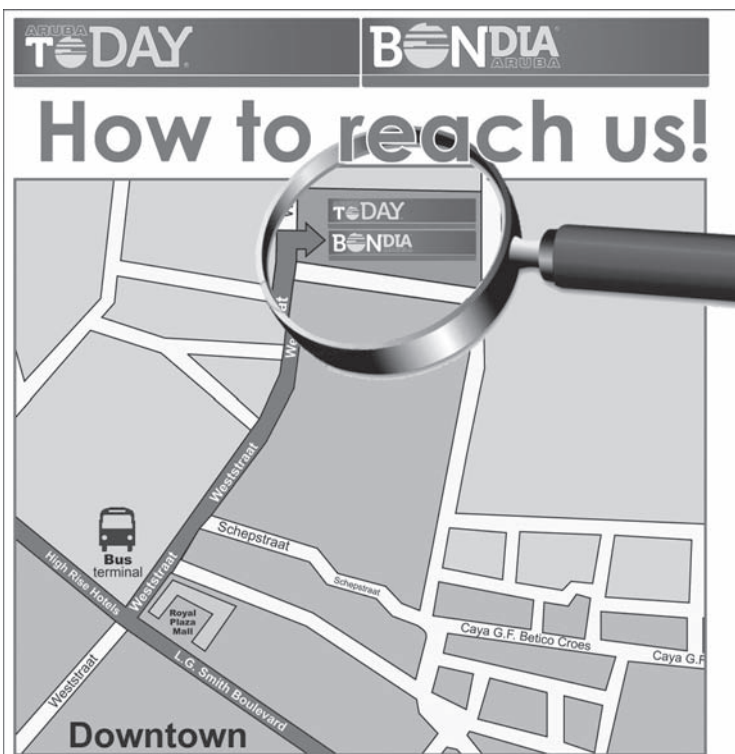
By The Associated Press
Associated Press

As Hurricane Beryl batters Texas and extreme heat blankets much of the U.S. South and West, the world is set for another week of wild weather that human-caused climate change makes more likely. Beryl made landfall around the middle the Texas coast near Matagorda with a dangerous storm surge and strong winds in the early hours of Monday. The powerful storm previously devastated parts of Mexico and the Caribbean.

It's the earliest a storm has ever reached the wind speeds of a Category 5 hurricane, fueled by the ocean being as warm in June as it typically would be in September after months of summer sun.

Beryl is just one example of extremes that are fueled by climate change. Here's what's happening related to extreme weather and the climate right now:

A persistent heat wave is lingering into Monday in parts of the U.S. with an excessive heat warning the National Weather Service's highest alert in effect for about 36 million people, or about 10% of the population. Several heat records have already been shattered by this latest heat wave, with several parts of Northern California hitting 110 Fahrenheit (43.3 Celsius). □



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Paramount and Skydance merge, signaling end of a family reign in Hollywood and the rise of new power

By **WYATTE GRANTHAM-PHILIPS**
AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP)—The entertainment giant Paramount will merge with Skydance, closing out a decades-long run by the Redstone family in Hollywood and injecting desperately needed cash into a legacy studio that has struggled to adapt to a shifting entertainment landscape.

It also signals the rise of a new power player, David Ellison, the founder of Skydance and son of billionaire Larry Ellison, the founder of the software company Oracle.

Shari Redstone's National Amusements has owned more than three-quarters of Paramount's Class A voting shares through the estate of her late father, Sumner Redstone. She had battled to maintain control of the company that owns CBS, which is behind blockbuster films such as "Top Gun" and "The Godfather."

Just weeks after turning down a similar agreement with Skydance, however, Redstone agreed to a deal on terms that had not changed much.

"Given the changes in the industry, we want to fortify Paramount for the future while ensuring that content remains king," said Redstone, who is chair of Paramount Global.

The new combined company is valued at around \$28 billion. In connection with the proposed transaction, which is expected to close in September 2025 pending regulatory approval, a consortium led by the Ellison family and RedBird Capital will be investing \$8 billion.

Skydance, based in Santa Monica, California, has helped produce some major Paramount hits in recent years, including Tom Cruise films like "Top Gun: Maverick" and installments of the "Mission Impossible" series. Skydance was founded in 2010 by David Ellison and it quickly formed a production partnership with Paramount that same year. If the deal is approved, Elli-



Producer David Ellison poses for the media during the 'Top Gun Maverick' UK premiere at a central London cinema, on Thursday, May 19, 2022.

Associated Press

son will become chairman and chief executive officer of what's being called New Paramount.

Ellison outlined the vision for New Paramount on a conference call about the transaction Monday. In addition to doubling down on core competencies, notably with a "creative first" approach, he stressed that the company needs to transition into a "tech hybrid" to stay competitive in today's evolving media landscape.

"You've watched some incredibly powerful technology companies move into the ... media space and do so very successfully," Ellison said. He added that it was "essential" for New Paramount to chart a similar course going forward.

That includes plans to "rebuild" the Paramount+ streaming service, Ellison noted, pointing to wider goals to expand direct-to-consumer business, such as increasing engagement time on the platform and reducing user churn. He also said that the company aims to transition to more cloud-based production and continue the use of generative artificial intelligence to boost efficiency. Executives also outlined further restructuring plans for New Paramount on Mon-

day's conference call, with chairman of RedBird Sports and Media Jeff Shell noting that they had identified some \$2 billion in cost efficiencies and synergies that they'll "attempt to deliver pretty rapidly."

Shell and others addressed the declining growth of linear TV.

Flagship linear brands will continue to represent a big chunk of the company's operations, but learning how to run this portion of business differently will be key, he said.

The on-again, off-again merger arrives at tumultuous time for Paramount, which has struggled to find its footing for years and its cable business has been hemorrhaging. In an annual shareholder meeting in early June, the company also laid out a restructuring plan that included major cost cuts.

Leadership at Paramount was also volatile earlier this year after its CEO Bob Bakish, following a number of disputes with Redstone, was replaced with an "office of the C.E.O.," run by three executives.

Four company directors were also replaced. Paramount is one of Hollywood's oldest studios, dating back its founding in 1914 as a distributor.

Throughout its rich history, Paramount has had a hand in releasing films from "Sunset Boulevard" and "The Godfather," to "Raiders of the Lost Ark" and "Titanic." The studio also distributed several early Marvel Cinematic Universe films, including "Iron Man" and "Thor," before the Disney acquisition. In addition to "Mission: Impossible" and "Top Gun," Paramount's current franchises include "Transformers," "Star Trek" and "Jackass."

While Paramount has not topped the annual domestic box office charts for over a decade, the wild box office success of "Top Gun: Maverick" in 2022 (nearly \$1.5 billion worldwide) was an important boon to both movie theaters and the industry's pandemic recovery. Still, its theatrical output has declined somewhat in recent years. Last year it released only eight new movies and came in fifth place for overall box office at around \$2 billion behind Universal (24 films), Disney (17 films), Warner Bros. and Sony. This year the release calendar is similarly modest, especially with the absence of "Mission: Impossible 8," which was pushed to 2025 amid the strikes. The studio has had some successes, with "Bob Marley:

One Love" and "A Quiet Place: Day One," and still to come is Ridley Scott's "Gladiator" sequel.

The National Association of Theatre Owners, a trade organization that represents over 35,000 screens in the U.S., said in a statement Monday that it plans to look closely at the details of the merger with an eye towards whether it will produce more or less theatrical releases.

"We are encouraged by the commitment that David Ellison and the Skydance Media team have shown to theatrical exhibition in the past," said Michael O'Leary, president and CEO of the National Association of Theatre Owners. "A merger that results in fewer movies being produced will not only hurt consumers and result in less revenue, but negatively impact people who work in all sectors of this great industry creative, distribution and exhibition."

Sumner Redstone used National Amusements, his family's movie theater chain, to build a vast media empire that included CBS and Viacom, which have merged and separated a number of times over the years. Most recently, the companies re-joined forces in 2019, undoing the split consummated in 2006. The company, ViacomCBS, changed its name to Paramount Global in 2022.

Under Sumner Redstone's leadership, Viacom became one of the nation's media titans, home to pay TV channels MTV and Comedy Central and movie studio Paramount Pictures.

It is a company with a rich history, as well as a deep bank of media assets, and Skydance wasn't the only one to gun for Paramount in recent months. Apollo Global Management and Sony Pictures also made competing offers.

Late last year, Warner Bros. Discovery also made headlines for exploring a potential merger with Paramount. But by February, Warner had reportedly halted those talks. □

Alex Bowman quiets Hendrick speculation with his Cup win on a rainy Chicago street course

By JAY COHEN
AP Sports Writer

CHICAGO (AP) — Alex Bowman spent his 30th birthday in an Iowa hospital after breaking his back in a short-track accident. Feeling as if he had let everyone down, it was a tough moment. That was just last year, and it seemed like a long time ago Sunday night.

Bowman is a NASCAR Cup Series winner once again after he held off Tyler Reddick in a shortened Grant Park 165 on a rainy street course in downtown Chicago. It was his first victory since March 2022 in Las Vegas, stopping an 80-race drought.

"There's a lot of emotions that go away with this because of how hard that has been," Bowman said.

With his eighth career Cup Series win, Bowman became the last of the four Hendrick Motorsports drivers to secure a playoff spot. He is the 12th Cup driver to win this year, leaving four remaining slots in the playoffs with six races left in the regular season. It also was the first Cup win for Blake Harris, who took over as Bowman's crew chief before the 2023 season. Bowman has 11 top-10 fin-



Alex Bowman gets out of his car after winning a NASCAR Cup Series auto race, Sunday, July 7, 2024, in Chicago.

Associated Press

ishes this year, but his winless drought had ramped up speculation about his future at Hendrick. That all seemed to go away this weekend. "I understand why people want to talk. ... It's a tough business," said NASCAR Hall of Famer Jeff Gordon, a Hendrick executive. "When you're at Hendrick Motorsports, you do expect, especially when the other three

have won, to be in that same category, and it hasn't been happening. Hopefully this dispels a lot of the rumors." Bowman's contract with Hendrick runs through the 2026 season. He made it clear that he felt the speculation about his future was overblown, but he definitely heard the talk.

"I think you need to win races whenever you're at HMS," he

said. "But certainly nobody has made me feel like I'm on the hot seat. There's never been a single conversation with a single person that has questioned anything to do with that at all. It's all been, what do you need, how can we help you, how can we support the team." Bowman is in his seventh full season at Hendrick. He got his first Cup Series victory at

Chicagoland Speedway in 2019. The Arizona native won again at Fontana in 2020, and then earned a career-best four wins during a break-out performance in 2021. But everything changed after he won at Las Vegas in March 2022. That same year, he was sidelined for five races after he sustained a concussion in a crash at Texas Motor Speedway. Then he had the back injury last year that kept him out for three points races and the All-Star festivities. "The concussion and then to straight away go break my back after recovering from that and then to just tremendously struggle through last year and kind of lose our way a little bit, it was really difficult," he said. Coming into Chicago, there was no sign that Bowman's drought was about to end. He had an engine issue at New Hampshire that ended his day on the 144th of 305 laps. He finished 14th at Nashville Superspeedway last weekend.

"I think the speed has been there," Harris said. "We talked, we had an engine failure at Loudon and we had an engine failure here last year at Chicago. □

Pete Alonso to compete in Home Run Derby for 5th time, joins Witt, Henderson, Bohm in July 15 field

PITTSBURGH (AP) — Pete Alonso will participate in his fifth straight Home Run Derby, with the New York Mets first baseman trying to win for the third time.

Kansas City's Bobby Witt Jr., Baltimore's Gunnar Henderson and Philadelphia's Alec Bohm also have committed to the July 15 event at Globe Life Field in Arlington, Texas.

Alonso made the announcement Sunday night on Instagram.

Alonso talked about it more in-depth Monday before the Mets played the Pirates in Pittsburgh. He said he wants to use whatever winnings he earns to refurbish amateur baseball fields through his charitable foundation. Alonso

has donated portions of his previous derby prizes to the Wounded Warrior Project aiding wounded service members and Tunnel to Towers, which supports first responders and their families. "It's something I'm very excited about and I'm happy they asked me because it's an opportunity to give back to the game," Alonso said. "I want to inspire the youth, get more kids out there playing baseball across the U.S."

Ken Griffey Jr. is the only three-time champion of the derby, which started in 1985, winning in 1994, 1998 and 1999.

Alonso won the competition in 2019 as a rookie at Cleveland's Progressive Field, edging Toronto's

Vladimir Guerrero 23-22 in the final round, then repeated in 2021 at Denver's Coors Field, beating Baltimore's Trey Mancini by the same score. There was no derby in 2020 because of the coronavirus pandemic. Alonso was eliminated by Seattle's Julio Rodríguez in the 2022 semifinals at Dodger Stadium in Los Angeles. Juan Soto, then of Washington, went on to win.

Alonso was knocked out 41-21 by Rodríguez last year at Seattle's T-Mobile Park, where Guerrero took the title and joined Vladimir Guerrero Sr. (2007) to become the first father-son duo to accomplish the feat. "I love participating because it's a full stadium

and the fans are there to see the same thing," Alonso said. "I think the cool part of our game is seeing balls hit far and hard. I think it's a great event. I really like

doing it because growing up watching it, was like 'If I have an opportunity to do it, I will.' Taking me back to 7-year-old me, it's a dream come true." □



New York Mets' Pete Alonso hits a home run during the sixth inning of a baseball game against the Houston Astros, Friday, June 28, 2024, in New York.

Associated Press

Taylor Fritz defeats two-time Grand Slam finalist Alexander Zverev in Wimbledon's fourth round

By **HOWARD FENDRICH**
AP Tennis Writer

LONDON (AP) — Taylor Fritz turned things around after dropping the opening two sets to defeat two-time Grand Slam finalist Alexander Zverev 4-6, 6-7 (4), 6-4, 7-6 (3), 6-3 on Monday and reach the Wimbledon quarterfinals. The 13th-seeded Fritz, a 26-year-old from California, equaled his career-best showing at a major tournament.

"It was amazing to do that on Centre Court (at) Wimbledon, two sets down, in front of this crowd," said Fritz, who lost to 22-time major champion Rafael Nadal in the quarterfinals at the All England Club two years ago. "The thing was, I felt like I was still playing really well for being down two sets. I was just thinking it would suck to be playing this well and just lose in three straight, so let's take the third. ... I had that belief." The 3 1/2-hour match, played with the main stadium's retractable roof shut, was the 35th to go five sets at Wimbledon this year, tying the record for the most at any Slam event in the Open era, which began in 1968.

And Fritz's comeback is the 11th from a two-set deficit



Taylor Fritz of the United States falls as he attempts to make a backhand return to Alexander Zverev of Germany during their fourth round match at the Wimbledon tennis championships in London, Monday, July 8, 2024.

in this edition of the grass-court tournament, more than in any other year.

The fourth-seeded Zverev was the runner-up to Carlos Alcaraz at the French Open last month after blowing a 2-1 lead in sets. He also lost in the final of the 2020 U.S. Open against Dominic Thiem after wasting a two-set lead and a match point.

The German entered Monday having won all nine sets

he played at Wimbledon this year and having held in all 41 of his service games not even facing a single break point since the first round. But Fritz broke him one time each in the third and fifth sets.

Looking ahead to this match-up, Fritz's analysis was rather succinct and, it turned out, completely accurate.

"We're playing on grass. It's just going to come down to

serve and return," he predicted.

"It's going to be a match of very few chances, and whoever takes the chances, kind of comes up with something, plays better in those tight moments, it's probably going to make the difference." Both thrived with big serves and short exchanges.

They combined for 124 winners (69 by Fritz) and 56 unforced errors (23 by Fritz).

Fritz hit 15 aces, with zero double-faults, and Zverev delivered 19 aces while competing with a gray sleeve on left knee, which he hurt during a fall in his previous match and said had a bone bruise.

"It was fairly obvious that I wasn't 100% today, right? I wasn't moving, really, the entire match. I wasn't running for drop shots. If I was running for a drop shot, I was limping there more than running," Zverev said. "Towards the end I mean, I thought from the fourth and fifth set I was really struggling to serve, as well, to jump off on my leg, to create some power."

The key stat, really, was this: Fritz faced only two break points and saved one, while accumulating four and converting two.

When it ended, Fritz threw his head back and let out a yell, before meeting Zverev at the net for an extended chat.

"It felt like in the fifth set, he wasn't moving as well," Fritz said. "So I just wished him the best."

Fritz joined countryman Tommy Paul in the final eight, giving the United States two men that deep in the tournament for the first time since 2000. □

Associated Press

UConn, coach Dan Hurley agree to 6-year, \$50 million deal a month after he spurned offer from Lakers

STORRS, Conn. (AP) — UConn and men's basketball coach Dan Hurley have agreed to a six-year, \$50

million contract through the 2029-30 season that makes him one of the nation's highest paid college

coaches nearly a month after he turned down a lucrative offer to coach the Los Angeles Lakers.

Hurley, who passed on guiding the storied NBA club to return to the two-time defending NCAA champions, can also earn more through performance-based incentives, a Monday release from the school stated. He will receive \$6.375 million next season in addition to his \$400,000 base annual salary, which includes compensation from speaking, consulting and media obligations.

The agreement, which includes a \$1 million annual retention bonus, will be covered by increased ticket sales revenue and donations from the Husky

Athletic Fund, the release added. It replaces the six-year, \$32.1 million agreement reached in June 2023 after Hurley won his first national championship with UConn.

Hurley 141-58 in six seasons with the Huskies and 292-163 overall entering his 15th as a Division I head coach acknowledged that the Lakers' six-year, \$70 million offer was "obviously tempting." He was also mentioned as a candidate for the Kentucky coaching vacancy after John Calipari left for Arkansas. But Hurley reiterated last month that he belongs at UConn and stated in the release that "it's an honor" to coach and represent the school and is proud of what the

program has rebuilt for supporters and fans.

He added: "We will continue to obsessively pursue championships and historic success, while continuing to develop great young men. Bleed Blue!"

UConn President Radenka Maric called Hurley the nation's best men's basketball coach and said he was delighted Hurley will continue to call it home. Athletic director David Benedict praised Hurley and wife Andrea for pouring themselves into rebuilding the program added that the contract recognizes the "immense" effort that has produced the results and the dedication it will require for the program to sustain it. □



UConn head coach Dan Hurley celebrates cutting the net after their win against Purdue in the NCAA college Final Four championship basketball game, Monday, April 8, 2024, in Glendale, Ariz.

Associated Press